

## District 69 - Committee Hearing on Driver Responsibility Fees

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**To:** "Mark Meadows" <markmeadows@house.mi.gov>  
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**Subject:** Committee Hearing on Driver Responsibility Fees

Honorable Mark Meadows, Chair  
Committee on Judiciary

Dear Representative Meadows and Members of the Committee:

My name is Judge William Ervin from Isabella County. Your Committee will be conducting hearings on June 19, 2009, on the Driver Responsibility Fees. I would like this to serve as my written testimony before your Committee regarding the Driver Responsibility Fees.

I know that these fees are a revenue source for the State, but I feel that they are counter-productive. First of all, it hurts those that can afford it the least. Many of the people I deal with in court have limited means of support. Many of them have low paying jobs. They need to be able to drive in order to find and keep a job. The Driver Responsibility Fees are an impediment for these people to be gainfully employed.

Let me give you an example of this. At a recent show cause hearing, I had an individual before me who was behind in child support. He explained to me that he found a job painting but when his employer found out that he didn't have a driver's license to drive from job to job, he was terminated. This resulted in his children not getting the child support they deserve. He owed over \$2000.00 in Driver Responsibility fees. He had three options. Pay the Driver Responsibility Fees, which he couldn't do because he didn't have the money; not drive and lose his job, which he did; or drive and risk getting another driving while license suspended ticket which will increase his Driver Responsibility fees.

When these people are out of work because they don't have adequate transportation, they don't pay any taxes, pay any child support or contribute to the welfare of the community. Even though public transportation is available in some communities, it isn't adequate to provide the type of transportation needed to get these people from workplace to workplace.

We have seen the number of driving while license suspended violations increase dramatically since this law was enacted. Many people are going to continue to drive if it is a choice of feeding their family or not driving, especially in rural communities.

My recommendation would be to eliminate the fees altogether because I feel they do more harm than good. The harm to custodial parents who don't receive child support because the noncustodial parent is not working because he or she doesn't have a driver's license, the harm to children because their parent can't get a job, and the lack of taxes these people are paying because they aren't gainfully employed.

I know in these tough budget times it is hard to eliminate a revenue source. However, I feel these fees punish children and families, especially those that can least afford it.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony regarding this matter. If you have any questions, please contact me at (989)621-0200 or email me at [p37@isabellacounty.org](mailto:p37@isabellacounty.org).

Regards,

William Ervin  
Isabella County Trial Court Judge